

Pineapple Christmas Cake

Thousands of New Zealanders swear by this recipe and have used it regularly since I made the cake on TV more than thirty years ago!

MAKES 1 X 23CM ROUND OR SQUARE CAKE

Cake Mix:

700g **Alison's Pantry Sultanas**

500g **Alison's Pantry Raisins**

250g Currants

50g mixed peel

432g can crushed pineapple in juice

3 cups high grade flour

1 tsp each cinnamon and mixed spice

½ tsp ground cloves

225g butter

1 cup sugar

½ tsp each vanilla, almond and lemon essences

6 large eggs

50g **Alison's Pantry Blanched Almonds**, to decorate (optional).

*For a modern twist on an old classic substitute the cake mix listed above for:

Cake Mix:

200g **Alison's Pantry Select Dates**, chopped

300g **Alison's Pantry Sultanas**

250g **Alison's Pantry Raisins**

200g Currants

200g **Alison's Pantry Chocolate Chunks**, chopped

300g **Alison's Pantry Figs**, chopped

The day before mixing the cake, put the dried fruit and undrained pineapple in a large fry pan. Cover pan, heat until liquid boils then simmer until all juice is absorbed. Leave overnight, or until cold.

Next day, combine flour and spices and set aside. In a very large bowl, cream butter, sugar and essences until light. Beat in eggs one at a time, adding 2 tablespoons of the spiced flour with each.

Stir in prepared (cold) fruit and remaining spiced flour. If mixture seems too soft, add extra flour until mixture will just drop from a spoon. Put in a lined tin, levelling the surface. Decorate with blanched almonds.

Bake at 150°C for 1½ hours, then 130°C for 2 hours longer, or until a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. (Brush hot cake with ¼ cup brandy or sherry if you like.)

Note: I usually bake this cake without using fan bake.

